

Pursuing Institutional Purpose

We are living in an era where global university schemes only offer narrow conceptions of quality, relying too heavily on international ranking systems. This timely book presents an alternative perspective on evaluating “world-class universities,” showcasing how eight very different higher education institutions have defined and are pursuing excellence in their own way. Each case study highlights how institutions can align their work with shared values and goals and strive to uphold these principles in all they do and say. The portraits offer insights into the ways institutions can create cultures of excellence tied to a vision of how to make a difference for their students and society. Their success suggests that policymakers should reward institutions that adopt and strive to fulfil particular educational purposes rather than continuing to perpetuate the status quo. This book is essential reading for researchers and students of education research, education policy, and international education reforms. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Matthew Hartley is Board of Advisors Professor of Education at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on academic governance and he has consulted with universities in emerging and established democracies in South Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and North Africa.

Alan Ruby is Senior Fellow at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. He has had a long career ranging from classroom teacher to Australian deputy secretary of education, to chair of the OECD education committee. He also served as director of the Human Development Sector for the East Asia Region of the World Bank.

Pursuing Institutional Purpose

Profiles of Excellence

Matthew Hartley

University of Pennsylvania

Alan Ruby

University of Pennsylvania





Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108840804

DOI: [10.1017/9781108892667](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108892667)

© Matthew Hartley and Alan Ruby 2025

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, with the exception of the Creative Commons version the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

An online version of this work is published at doi.org/10.1017/9781108892667 under a Creative Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC 4.0 which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in any medium providing appropriate credit to the original work is given. You may not distribute derivative works without permission. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0>

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI [10.1017/9781108892667](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108892667)

First published 2025

Cover image: *Spiral abstract background* by filo via Getty.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Hartley, Matthew, 1964– author. | Ruby, Alan, author.

TITLE: Pursuing institutional purpose : profiles of excellence / Matthew Hartley, Alan Ruby.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2024. |

Series: Cambridge education research | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2024015900 (print) | LCCN 2024015901 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108840804 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781108743983 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108892667 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Education, Higher–Aims and objectives–Case studies. | Universities and colleges–Research–

Case studies. | Educational change–Case studies. | Education and globalization–Case studies.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC LB2322.2 .H38 2024 (print) | LCC LB2322.2 (ebook) | DDC 378–dc23/eng/20240508

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2024015900>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2024015901>

ISBN 978-1-108-84080-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.